



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515
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COMMITTEE ON
NATURAL RESOURCES
CHAIRMAN EMERITUS

COMMITTEE ON
TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE

REPUBLICAN
POLICY COMMITTEE

CANADA-U.S.
INTER-PARLIAMENTARY GROUP

The Hon. Jeffrey Zients
White House Coronavirus Response Coordinator
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. Zients,

As our nation continues to fight the COVID-19 pandemic, I write with urgent questions brought to me by Alaskans concerned about the recent rollout of COVID-19 rapid antigen test kits through the United States Postal Service (USPS). Access to rapid testing kits continues to be of significant importance, particularly as we work to ensure schools are safe and community gatherings can commence. Since the pandemic began, I have voted in support of billions in appropriations funding to expand our nation's testing capacity and ensure that tests are available for those who need them. As you may know, Alaska is extremely unique among the states. Unfortunately, this week's federal test kit rollout has fallen far short of the distinctive challenges of Alaskans.

America is an Arctic nation because of Alaska, and it is not uncommon for areas of our state to reach -70 °F or even lower. COVID-19 rapid antigen test kits currently authorized by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) are generally approved to be stored at temperatures above 36°F. Very frankly, our state's cold temperatures put federally issued test kits in jeopardy of spoiling; a situation made even more dire by continued test kit supply restraints. What is the Administration doing to ensure the unique nature of Alaska's climate is not impacting the distribution and effectiveness of rapid test kits?

Alaska is also highly rural, and many families in remote communities do not have street addresses at all. Countless Alaskans rely on Post Office Boxes or Highway Contract Route Addresses (HCRAs). Additionally, many families who operate small businesses use the same PO Box for personal and business use. The current system declines individuals whose PO Boxes are used for business purposes or who share a PO Box with others, creating multiple roadblocks for my constituents attempting to sign up for their COVID-19 test kits. What is the Administration doing to ensure that my rural constituents, particularly remote Alaska Native communities, are not left out of the rapid test rollout? What can be done to make it possible for those without a street address to utilize the USPS General Delivery service as a workaround?

Finally, my office is receiving reports that the sign-up page does not recognize separate units within the same apartment building. While many Alaskans live in single-family homes, countless

others live in apartments or condominiums, particularly those in large population centers. Each unit in an apartment building deserves the same access to test kits as anyone else. Does the Administration have plans or an alternative for Alaskans residing in multi-unit properties?

These test kits can help keep communities safe, and I can appreciate the intent behind the rollout. However, too many Alaskans are being left in the dark with little guidance and no answers. I stand ready to work together in good faith to improve this program. In the meantime, I look forward to a timely response.

Sincerely,



DON YOUNG
Congressman for All Alaska